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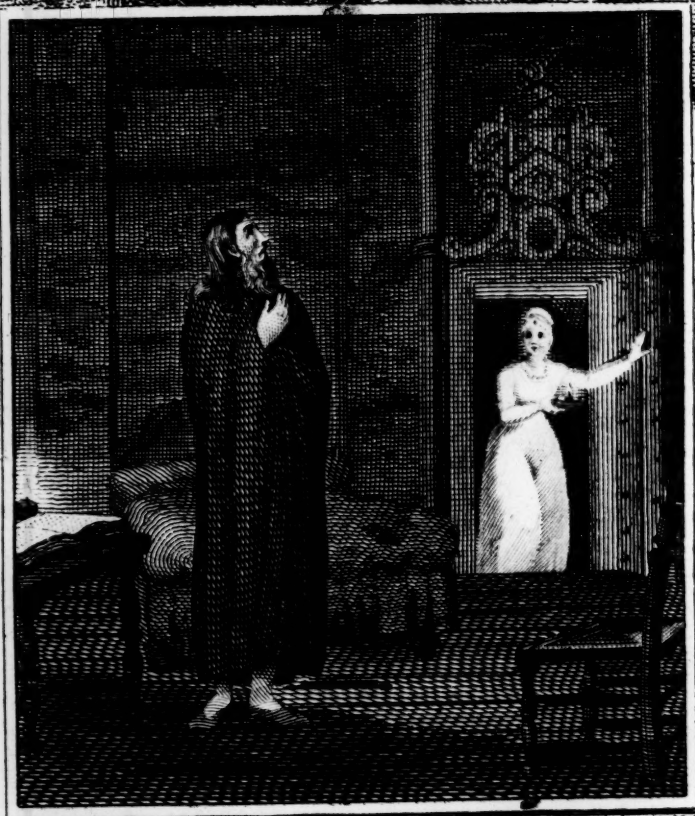
THE
BARON
OF
LAUDERBROOKE.
A TALE.

BARON



J. A. B. MUSEUM & HISTORY





Alicia discovering her Father in the Castle.

W. Granger, del. et sc.

Published for F. Roe, Aug. 1800.

The
 BARON
 OF
 Sanderbrooke.
 A TALE
 BY
 W. HOLLOWAY.



W. Granger del. et sc.

Printed for: Ann Lemoine, White Rose Co. Coleman st.

AND

Sold by J. Hurst, Paternoster Row.

One Shilling



THE
BARON
OF
LAUDERBROOKE.

A TALE.

BY
W. HOLLOWAY.

*To breathe the inspiring spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast.*

THOMSON.

London:

Printed by T. Maiden, Sherbourns-Lane

For Ann Lemoine, White-Rose Court, Coleman-
Street, and sold by T. Hurst,
Paternoster-Row.

1800.

THE
BARON

LAUDERBROOK

A TALE

W. HOLMES



Presented to the British Museum
by the Hon. the Earl of Lauderdale
in 1841, and sold by T. Agnew,
Printers, 15, Abchurch Lane.

PREFACE.

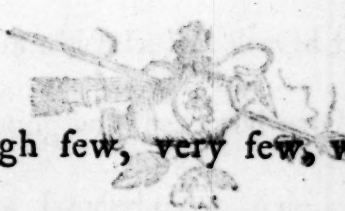
IT is certainly far more excusable to fail in the attempt to fabricate a consistent and engaging story, than to corrupt the heart, and inflame the passions, by sentiments inimical to the principles of virtue.

A happy combination of surprizing incidents, tending to bring about some fortunate

and unexpected event, might, indeed, engage the attention, and sufficiently satisfy a mind intent only on a mere superficial and transient species of amusement: but I have always considered that, in this kind of writing, an *object* of a *higher nature* ought to be kept in view.

Simple morality, unassisted by any kind of machinery, (if I may be allowed the expression,) is, by the generality of mankind, at best, accounted but a dry and unenter-
taining

taining study. Even our grand system of religion is happily embellished with all the united aids of symbol, allusion, and allegory; and, in all ages and nations, men of the greatest abilities, and most rigid principles, have had recourse to fable and metaphor, to allure the mind to hear the voice of instruction.



Though few, very few, writers possess the abilities of a *Richardson* or a *Fielding*, yet, as a celebrated critic observes, "Be-

tween mediocrity and perfection there are many stations, which may be filled with honour;" and those who are not qualified to shine in a distinguished manner, may, nevertheless, be able, in their leisure moments, humbly to serve the cause of virtue and humanity.

W. H.



THE

Baron of Lauderbrooke.

RETURNING from the fatigues of a long day's chase, in which he had strayed from all his attendants, fainting with heat, and parched with thirst, the Baron of Lauderbrooke rode up to a straw-roofed cottage, on a lone heath, in order to procure a draught of water.

He was met at the door by a decent-looking woman, whose countenance betrayed evident marks of surprize and confusion, at the appearance of so unusual a visitor.

At her request, he alighted; and she set on a table of rude planks, a bowl of milk, and a crust of brown bread; making a thousand apologies for the meanness of the entertainment; to which she rejoined, "If your Honour chuses to stay till my daughter returns from yon village, I shall then have it in my power to treat you with an egg and a rasher of bacon. I expect her every minute."

"Thanks

"Thanks for your kindness," replied the Baron ;
"I wish for nothing better: nor should I make a
"heartier repast from the delicacies of my own ta-
"ble. Then, Dame, I conceive you have a daugh-
"ter?" "Your Honour will see her presently,"
answered his hostess. "And a husband likewise
"living?" said he. "Yes, your Honour. He
"is now at work at the vicar's, in the village,"
said she; "and I am sure he would be glad of your
"good company; for we do not often see strangers
"at our poor habitation. The times are main hard,
"Sir; but, thank God, Providence is very kind to
"us. O, your Honour, that same vicar is a dear
"good man! Aye, and Madam, his wife, is as good

“ a woman; and he is a great scholard. ’Tis said
“ as how ne’er a man in the country can read better.
“ He writes out all his own *farments*, and repeats
“ ’em almost without looking in the book. He
“ would fain take our girl; but he has a large fa-
“ mily, and can’t afford to keep *no sarvants*. Howf-
“ ever, he always teaches her the *catichize*; and is
“ always giving her good *device* and instruction,
“ which is better than gold and silver; for

“ When house and land is gone and spent,

“ Then *larning* is most excellent.”

“ True, Goody,” said the Baron, smiling; “but
“ let us, for a moment, suppose——”

Here

Here the discourse was interrupted by the arrival of Alicia. On her arm she bore a little wicker basket, covered with a clean white cloth; and in her hand she carried a large bunch of flowers. She appeared much surprized at the sight of a stranger, and dropped a low curtsy as she entered.

Her age seemed to be about fifteen. Her form was tall and graceful; nor did she need "the foreign aid of ornament" to add lustre to her native charms. On her cheek the lily and the rose were happily contrasted; the carnation of health glowed on her lips; her large blue eyes beamed with peculiar radiance; and auburn ringlets, in glossy clusters, finely shaded a neck and bosom of polished ivory.

“The bloom of op’ning flow’rs, unfully’d beauty,

“Softness, and sweetest innocence she wore ;

“And look’d like nature in the world’s first spring.”

She felt embarrassed at the Baron’s compliments, which he now began to lavish on her charms ; and a suffusion of deeper crimson rushed over her cheek.

He perceived, and endeavoured to calm her perturbation, by conversing on the most familiar topics ; in the course of which he took occasion to ask, whether she was disposed, in case an opportunity offered, to accept of a menial situation in a respectable family. She answered, with bewitching modesty,

deftly, in the affirmative, provided her parents acquiesced in the choice, as she ever made their will the rule of her actions.

“ I believe, then,” cried he, “ I have it in my power to recommend you, on condition you can reconcile yourself to live at the distance of about fourteen miles from hence. You have heard of Lauderbrooke-Hall? A servant of your description is there wanting. You will have my best wishes for your success. Your mother says you are a good girl; continue to be so, and I will be your friend; for to raise merit from obscurity will ever be my highest ambition.”

Alicia

Alicia dropped another curtsy; a smile of pleasure cheered her countenance, and she looked up to her mother for her approbation.

“In troth,” cried the good woman, “your Honour is hugeous kind; but I must consult our Ambrose first; for he has set his heart on Alle; and is always mightily in the dumps at the thoughts of parting with her. But the times are so hard!—Ah! one don’t know——(*Pausing, doubtfully*)—Nevertheless, Sir, he’ll be at home presently. If you’ll wait a little, he’ll likewise put you in the right road in a trice.”

“Indeed,

"Indeed, I must be gone," said the Baron.

"Night advances apace; and some drops begin to

"fall. Make up your own minds on the business,

"and you shall hear from me again soon."

The good woman urged him to stay; but she expostulated in vain. He put a piece of gold into the hand of Alicia; and, promising her his future assistance, thanked them for their hospitality, and took his leave.

Scarcely had Ambrose entered the door, ere his ears were filled with the praises of the worthy gentleman who had been there; and Dorothy dwelt, with

with peculiar emphasis on his promises to procure
Alicia a place of service.

"Do not be too hasty, wife," cried he, with a
significant shrug. "Your gentlefolks are not always
sincere in their promises; and, 'tis said, they have
wounded short memories."

"There it is now," said Dorothy. "You are
always so disbelieving: but I know who is who,
as I have often told you; and, you know, I am
always pretty right. He is certainly a proper
gentleman; one may see that plain enough by his
behaviour and generosity."

Here

Here she produced the money, which seemed to have a wonderful effect on the old man's temper. So powerful an arbitrator is omnipotent gold, that it has, not unfrequently, determined weightier causes, and biassed firmer minds!

"Why, to be sure," answered Ambrose, in a lower tone, and with his eyes fixed, "he *might* be "a gentleman, for *certain*. I should like to have "seen him. But there's a power of deceit in the "world; and these young girls are never out of "harm's way. However, if Alle and you can "agree upon the matter, though I am loath to part "with the girl, as 'tis for her good, I shan't have "no objection."

After

After a little altercation on the subject, it was finally adjusted and resolved on, that, should the gentleman ever send for her, agreeable to her own inclination, she should go.

But a few days had elapsed before a messenger arrived from the Baron, desiring a peremptory answer to his Lord's former proposal. He spoke highly of the virtues of his Lady in particular, and the family in general. In consequence of which, he received a promise that the honest peasant should attend his daughter to Lauderbrooke-Hall in the course of the succeeding week. The interval was spent in making preparations for this important expedition.

The

The long-expected morning, "big with the fate" of our youthful heroine, at length arrived, on which, after a sleepless night, she arose, at the first crowing of the cock; and, dressing herself to the best advantage, amidst mutual tears of mingled pleasure and regret, bade adieu to those scenes of infantile happiness, where simplicity and innocence had long fixed their abode, to trace the more dangerous and beaten paths of life!

Their arrival at the Hall being announced, Alicia was received by the worthy Lady Lauderbrooke not with marks of kindness only, but with a degree of maternal familiarity and tenderness; and she was,
given

given to understand, that her situation was to be that of an immediate attendant on her Ladyship.

Lady Lauderbrooke appeared to be about the meridian of life; and her countenance was highly expressive of the graces of her mind. She had formerly possessed very considerable personal charms: but she had for many years been subject to the caprices of a husband, whose turbulent and unsettled passions, like wintry blasts, had shook the roses of health from her cheek. A kind of pleasing melancholy had cast a shade over a fine set of features, which were only relieved by a settled gleam of placid resignation.

Her

Her lord was not destitute of some virtues; but they were those of the rougher cast. He was little acquainted with the fine feelings of the heart, and those soft attractions so endearing to the mind of sensibility. She had not only long experienced a want of conjugal tenderness on his part, but a degree of coolness and neglect, which had preyed on her spirits, but which she had always borne without murmuring or resentment. The loss of some amiable relatives had likewise not a little contributed to that melancholy which had a very considerable effect on a delicate constitution. She had therefore sequestered herself as much as possible, and very seldom saw company; spending the greatest part of her

her time in retirement. Alicia Elmford, on account of congenial sentiments, rendering herself extremely agreeable to her, she resolved to treat her more like a companion than a servant; and having observed in her a good capacity, she procured teachers to instruct her in those polite studies which elevate and adorn the sex.

Alicia in a short time made such a proficiency, that she astonished all who knew her; being, without the least tincture of ostentation, a most amiable and accomplished young lady.

Lord

Lord Lauderbrooke had a son, who, having just completed his education, had returned home to take leave of his friends, in order to proceed on his tour to the continent. Augustus was about the age of nineteen, and still bore all the graces of the lovely boy. His dark hair waved in clusters over his rosy cheek, and an enchanting pensiveness shone in his large lucid eyes; nor did his conversation or conduct betray any marks of the wild and profligate youth of fortune. His disposition was sweet and cheerful, and his manners such as could not fail to ensure universal respect and esteem.

In the presence of Alicia Elmford, his eyes seemed to brighten with a peculiar kind of pleasure; nor did she appear displeased with his marked attention to her. So well did he fabricate excuses to prolong his stay, that he succeeded, without being the least suspected, to delay his journey for several months; in the course of which he redoubled his assiduities; although the utmost circumspection was necessary to hide his attachment from his parents, being well aware that the ambitious spirit of his father would have felt degraded at their inequality; and taking the alarm, have brought down sure vengeance on both their heads.

Previous

Previous to his departure, he had engaged her to hold a friendly, but private, correspondence with him: and at the crisis of separation, she experienced in her bosom a kind of sorrow, to which she had hitherto been a stranger. Her heart then told her that her's must be something more than a common esteem.

Young Augustus took the earliest opportunity of fulfilling his promise of writing the moment of his arrival on the continent; and but few weeks passed without her receiving fresh testimonies of unabated affection. His letters were dictated with all

that warmth and zeal which in general actuate youthful minds in the ardent moments of their first passion.

Those letters were transmittted from the neighbouring village by the hands of an honest peasant, whom Alicia had found worthy of making a confidant in a matter of such importance. Here it may not be improper to take notice of the commencement of her acquaintance with this poor family, as it may serve to illustrate the humanity and goodness of her heart.

She had always considered early rising as highly conducive to health; on which account she accus-

tomed

toned herself, in all seasons of the year, when the weather permitted, to take her morning's walk. In one of those little excursions, which she had inadvertently extended to more than a mile from the mansion, in the hedge-rows of which were interspersed large overhanging trees, a deep groan, bursting from the inmost recess of an aching heart, caught her ear. She started, and gazed around her, but nothing could she discern, till, directed by repeated accents, in a fainter tone, she got to the top of the bank; where her curiosity was satisfied, or rather shocked, by the sight of a poor wretch, apparently in agonies of the last despair, about to plunge himself into a

deep and silent river, that stole through the black shade of ozers, and high-waving rushes.

A sudden resolution, and firmness of mind, which she always possessed, urged her to press forward, and address the unfortunate man.

“For heaven’s sake!” said she, “and for your own soul’s sake! whoever you are, forbear this rashness! Make me your confidant, and, as far as I can assist you, pray command me.”

He shrunk back, and contemplated her figure with an eye of phrenzied wildness; when, as it were,

were, recollecting himself, "Madam," said he,
"I thank you for your kind intentions; but, in-
"deed, they come too late! Why will you not
"suffer a wretch to steal silently into that state
"where the weary, and the unfortunate, shall for
"ever be at rest?"

"Yield not," said she, "poor man, to the guilty
"suggestions of a fruitless melancholy. Reflect,
"how often imagined evil is productive of real good.
"Rely on the dispensations of an all-wise Provi-
"dence; and hope——"

B 4.

"Ah!

“Ah! Madam,” interrupted he, “Hope has long
“been a stranger to this bosom. ’Tis not for my-
“self alone this heart bleeds——”

He could proceed no farther; involuntary tears
started from his eyes.

She endeavoured to soothe his mind with every
argument humanity could suggest; and thus drew from
him a candid confession of the nature of his misfor-
tunes, which he acknowledged, had been the conse-
quences of his own indiscretions. His name, he
said, was Anthony. Employment had failed. He
had a sick wife, and three helpless innocents, who
looked

looked up to him for that support which he was unable to give. The lord of the manor had treated him with unfeeling rigour ; and his unhappy family had, for several days past, merely subsisted on casual charity. All those things, he said, had determined him to throw off an existence he was no longer able to bear.

After reasoning him into a calmer temper, she resolved to be an eye-witness to the truth of his assertion, by accompanying him to his wretched hovel. Here, stretched on a wisp of straw, she beheld the unhappy partner of his misery, pale and emaciated. The infants, half naked and shivering, were devour-

ing their last mouldy morsel; and a broken pitcher contained the cold beverage with which they slaked their thirst.

Alicia's heart was full; and, after a few minutes silence, she mingled with their tears the streams of generous sympathy.

Her first act was to render them immediate pecuniary assistance; promising to use her interest with the curate of the village, a good man, who used to visit the Hall, to procure him a comfortable employment. She gave the grateful family an admonitory lesson; and took her leave with that satisfaction of mind,

mind, which only the good and benevolent can ever know.

Her exertions in their favour were crowned with success. With the sincerest anxiety for their welfare, she had represented their case, and pleaded so strongly in their favour, to her good Lady, whose heart was ever alive to the warm emotions of pity, that she not only encouraged her in her laudable undertaking, but crowned the work with her own patronage, and pecuniary aid. She soon saw the poor family of Anthony's comfortable and happy; and, at her frequent visits, looking up to her, and

B 6 hanging

hanging round her, as their best beloved friend and benefactress.

The health of Lady Lauderbrooke now appeared more rapidly to decline; and her amiable qualifications and saint-like virtues were every day heightened, by the fortitude and Christian resignation which she more and more displayed, in her advances to a premature grave. Her favourite Alicia became every day more dear to her; and she seemed happy in her company only.

As she always looked with composure to the conclusion of her sorrows, which she considered to be

not

not far distant, she prevailed on her Lord, who sometimes indifferently, and formally, enquired after her health, to permit her beloved son to return, in order to receive her last blessing, and close her weary eyes.

In the contemplation of this subject, she one day retired with Alicia, and, for the first time, frankly opened to her the bitter secrets of her heart.

“My dear girl,” said she, which was her frequent expression, “having long tried, and fully proved, your virtues and fidelity, and being well aware that the time is fast approaching when I shall have for

“ ever done with all worldly concerns; it behoves
“ me, while yet my mental powers are adequate to
“ the task, to deposit in a bosom, which I know to
“ be worthy of the trust, circumstances, which, had
“ I never been blest with so worthy a confidant, had
“ descended with me into the realms of forgetful-
“ ness.

“ The boast of noble ancestry is among the first
“ of human follies: but I must derogate from truth,
“ not to acknowledge that I am lineally descended
“ from one of the first families in England. My
“ parents, from high and mistaken notions of honour,
“ without consulting a daughter's future happiness,
“ forced

“ forced me into an alliance diametrically opposite to
“ my wishes. Young, gay, and inexperienced, I
“ was betrayed into the golden snare, by the arti-
“ fices even of those who ought to have directed me
“ into the path of conjugal felicity, by aiding the
“ bent of my own virtuous inclinations.

“ My Lord, whose morals were far from unim-
“ peachable, for awhile conducted himself so ami-
“ ably, as to make an entire conquest of my affec-
“ tions, which had hitherto been in a state of indif-
“ ference towards him. As is but too often the
“ case with mankind, he took a mean advantage of
“ my weakness, and shortly treated me in a manner
“ little

“ little consistent with the connubial character. His
“ hours were divided between his bottle and his mis-
“ tresses, nor did he even endeavour to lull my
“ aching heart with common prudence, and conceal-
“ ment of those acts of profligacy. Such a change
“ threw a cloud over all my golden prospects, and
“ sunk me into such a state of listlessness, with re-
“ gard to worldly concerns of any description, as
“ was seldom interrupted but by the violent bursts of
“ his impetuous passions, which sometimes broke
“ forth with such fury on the most trivial occasions,
“ as must have agitated any mind not more than
“ human.

“ There

“ There are men, my dear Alicia, whose wives
“ are only slaves to their passions and their ambition;
“ who, like the Mahometans, deem them inferior
“ beings, without souls, who ought to be kept at an
“ awful distance, to have no will of their own, and
“ be treated as creatures only fit for a state of de-
“ pendence and subordination!

“ The only consolation I found amidst those trou-
“ bles, was in the friendship of an amiable cousin
“ of the name of Beaufort, whose domestic virtues
“ were only equalled by his superior skill and cou-
“ rage in the field. His mansion and estates were
“ not inconsiderable, and lay contiguous to our own,

“ to

“ to which, since his loss, they have been annexed.

“ Bred a foldier almost from his cradle, at the
“ commencement of the late wars, he took leave of
“ an affectionate wife, and infant daughter, and em-
“ barked for the theatre of action.

“ Meanwhile, his amiable consort spent most of
“ her time in retirement with me; and those hours,
“ which now add anguish to my heart by recollection,
“ I accounted among the happiest I had known
“ since my marriage. But I was too soon con-
“ vinced of the instability of human enjoyments!

“ The

“ The fatal news arrived, that Edmund had
“ fallen at the head of his troops, in a glorious and
“ decisive engagement : and, before the first emo-
“ tions of our grief subsided, another heavy afflic-
“ tion followed. The nurse, who used to take a
“ morning’s walk for the health of the infant in the
“ neighbouring woodlands, one day disappeared,
“ and has never since been heard of.

“ This shock was too much for the intellects of
“ the widowed, and truly distressed, parent. She
“ was long in a state of ungovernable delirium; and,
“ when we deemed her grief somewhat subsided,
“ she one evening absented herself from our house

“ without

“ without any attendant; and having never since
“ been discovered, we concluded she had made away
“ with herself in a paroxysm of absolute despair.

“ Judge now if the heart of sensibility, by such
“ a series of disastrous events, must not be too deeply
“ lacerated to admit of a speedy, much less a radi-
“ cal, cure?

“ From the first moment I beheld you, I traced
“ in your features such a resemblance to my unfor-
“ tunate relation, as well as similitude in your vir-
“ tues of mind, that I could not forbear a tender
“ attachment

“ attachment to you. For your very kind and af-
“ fectionate services to me, I have made a provision
“ for you, after my decease, which might embolden
“ you to look up with hopes to form a respectable
“ connexion, when you shall wish to change your
“ condition; and I am well aware that your perso-
“ nal, as well as mental, accomplishments, are such
“ as would do honour to the most exalted station of
“ life.

“ I speak in confidence to you, who have so
“ well merited that confidence. Should my dear
“ boy ever prefer the conjugal state, it is my prayer,
“ that

“that he might be blest with a partner of such
“amiable qualifications.”

A deep blush overspread the lovely countenance of Alicia. She attempted to speak her gratitude; but her articulation failed, and Lady Lauderbrooke proceeded.

“It has been the will of heaven to place you in a
“dependent situation; but from hence I would not
“wish you to think too meanly of yourself. You
“have a character to support equally dear as that of
“those in a far more elevated rank. On your side
“are great advantages, and disadvantages. You
“may,

“ may, in some degree, think yourself happy that
“ your inclinations are not likely to be forced, by
“ ambitious or mercenary parents, into any disagree-
“ able connexion. But, on the other hand, you
“ are not out of the reach of those temptations to
“ which youth and beauty are continually exposed.
“ By saying this, I would not have you infer that
“ I mean to insinuate, you have not a mind equal
“ to the attempts of depraved man; on the con-
“ trary, I am persuaded that your fortitude and
“ virtue would eventually triumph over all tempta-
“ tion. Yet an admonitory word from a dying
“ friend, I am assured, will not fail of having it’s
“ due

“ due weight whenever, on a future occasion, it

“ might recur to your mind.

“ The season of youth, Alicia, is a trying sea-

“ son. At our first setting out in life, the scene is

“ novel and pleasing: we look around us with en-

“ thusiasm; and, on a superficial survey, fondly

“ imagine that all who will may be happy and vir-

“ tuous. We hastily trust to appearances, from a

“ confidence, that all others are as artless and un-

“ designing as ourselves. The frailty of our sex, in

“ particular, which ought to excite pity, and claim

“ protection

“ protection from man, is but too much the subject
“ of his contempt—too often the cause of our ruin.
“ Credulous by nature and education, we are first
“ betrayed, and then ridiculed and despised. It,
“ therefore, behoves you, in this perilous state,
“ not only to walk circumspectly, but, above all,
“ to implore divine grace to assist you in your pas-
“ sage through life. Tis said, “ He that trusteth
“ his own heart is a fool.” Lean not too hard on
“ slightly tried friendship ; it might prove a spear to
“ pierce you to the heart ! Listen with caution to
“ the voice of flattery ; her golden bowl is fraught
“ with the deadliest poison.

“ Above all things, I would have you beware of
“ pride : It is the bane of youth, which, while it
“ pretends to elevate, finks you in the esteem of
“ mankind ; and is, in fact, the meanest of human
“ passions. To be humble, is to be wise. This is
“ a doctrine particularly inculcated and enforced by
“ the Christian religion ; and let that religion ever
“ be the criterion of all your actions. When you
“ look down on the lowest of the human race, say
“ to yourself, Those are my brothers and my sis-
“ ters ; and it is owing to no merit of my own, but
“ to the peculiar favour and will of heaven, that
“ my lot hath not been cast among them. Then,

“ to

“ to the utmost of your ability, let your duty be
“ your pleasure. Open the liberal hand, expand
“ the benevolent heart, and enjoy the best of luxu-
“ ries—that of doing good !

“ The moment is fast approaching when you will
“ have my council and protection no longer ; yet
“ do I hope my survivors will so far honor my me-
“ mory, as to study your happiness. Nevertheless, re-
“ member—favour is deceitful.—Place your reli-
“ ance on a higher Power;—a Power that is will-
“ ing, and able, to direct and save. On this Power

“ have I relied through all the trying scenes of life,
“ and many indeed have they been; and to this Di-
“ vine Power do I trust, to lead me through the valley
“ of the shadow of Death, and land me on that hap-
“ py shore where sin and sorrow shall for ever cease;
“ where those who have been washed in the blood of
“ the Lamb, enjoy uninterrupted pleasures at the
“ right hand of the Deity for ever! Our good
“ chaplain, Dr. Goodwill, I recommend for your
“ future monitor——I would fain say more;
“ but the weakness of my frame prevents me.——
“ My blessing is all I can add.”

Overspent,

Overspent, and nearly fainting, she here reclined her head on the bosom of Alicia, whose heart throbbed with contending passions. She was conscious she had indulged a partiality for Augustus incompatible with her duty, the concealment of which she considered as a breach of confidence and gratitude towards his honoured parent, whose every act of openness and generosity added to her affliction. She sometimes thought of throwing herself at her feet, avowing her passion, and promising to stifle it for ever, though at the expence of her future happiness; but she dreaded the idea of implicating the amiable youth in her misfortunes. Love

and gratitude held divided empire in her breast, nor were all the powers of reason able to decide the strife.

The tender and affectionate manner in which Lady Lauderbrooke took an opportunity to address her Lord, drew tears from those eyes so unused to weep, and apparently carried conviction to his heart; though she sedulously avoided giving him pain by remarks, or even by bringing to his mind any disagreeable reflections on his past misconduct. In the warmest and most pathetic language, she expressed her solicitude for his welfare; recommended

Alicia

Alicia Elmford to his protection, on her account ;
and conjured him to extend his views to another and
a better state.

He was overcome with her goodness, and, clasping her in his arms, pronounced her the most amiable, the best of women. This kindness lighted up a kind of transient pleasure in her eyes, expressive of those emotions which her weak nature was scarcely capable of supporting.

On the wings of filial affection, Augustus flew to receive the last blessing of the best of mothers. The

interview was such as might have been naturally expected from the parent's situation, and the son's sensibility. Unwilling to alienate his mind in the smallest degree, she touched but slightly on his father's indiscretions; and that but with a view of cautioning him to avoid such an example.

“My dearest son,” concluded she, “I look
“back with pleasure to your dutiful conduct hither-
“to; and, I hope, the future will never disgrace
“the past. I could wish to live to see you happily
“established in life: but it is not the will of Hea-
“ven—

“ven—and that will alone be done! I submit to
“it’s irrevocable decrees with reverence and resig-
“nation. You will one day come into the posses-
“sion of an ample fortune; but trust not to fortune
“for happiness; if you do, you will be deceived.
“Let me, above all things, advise you, whenever
“you think of the conjugal state, to beware that
“you are not misled by avarice or ambition. Let
“the superstructure of love be raised on the broad
“and solid base of a faithful esteem. Before you
“enter on that important state, consider not merely
“whether the woman you prefer can make you
“happy, but, divesting yourself of every selfish

"principle, be sure that you can render her like-

"wise completely so.

"Alicia Elmford I recommend to your indul-

"gent notice ; and it is my desire you should, as

"you have hitherto done, treat her with a brother-

"ly affection. I love her as a daughter ; you will

"not be disgraced by adopting her for a sister.

"Virtue is amiable in every situation in life ; and it

"is no inconsiderable proof of true wisdom to set

"upon it, wherever found, it's proper value."

Augustus

Augustus fell on his knee, took the extended hand of his tender parent, and bathed it in a flood of undissembled tears: but his heart was too full for utterance: He was obliged to quit the room, unable to express his gratitude, and shut himself up in his study, to reflect, in melancholy silence, on the loss he was about to sustain.

During the few remaining days of her good Lady, Alicia was her constant attendant, and scarcely ever quitted her presence; and, in her last moments, the worthy Dr. Goodwill, who had long been her

spiritual father and comforter, administered to her the last sacred ordinance; and had the happiness to see her, with unshaken faith, and cheerful hope, resign her spirit into the hands of her blessed Redeemer.

The death of this divine woman not only involved the family at the Hall in the deepest affliction, but spread a gloom over all the neighbourhood; the poor inhabitants having lost in her their best friend and benefactress: though it was generally believed that Miss Elmford, who was her exact counterpart, would supply her place to the utmost of her ability.

His

His Lordship too late lamented, with the deepest sorrow, the best of women ; and, for her sake, promised to Alicia eternal gratitude and protection.

The lovely girl now flew for consolation to the calm Christian reasoning of Dr. Goodwill. This good man, who was an honour to his profession, in early life, had met with much opposition, on account of his scrupulous integrity in matters of religion ; and his honest and ~~dis~~ingenuous reproofs (for he never feared the face of man) were so many obstacles in his way to the favour of the great, and to

worldly

worldly promotion. Such was the man whom the pious Lady Lauderbrooke had chosen for her spiritual preceptor, and had prevailed on her Lord, who was indifferent in those things, to patronize.

He was rector of a village, which produced him a very inconsiderable income : but the private bounty of this Lady rendered his situation comfortable, and enabled him to perform many acts of charity, independent of those which he daily executed as her immediate almoner.

Nor

Nor did she neglect handsomely to provide for him in her last illness.

Shortly after the death of her Lady, Miss Elmford conceived that the morals of Augustus had not been improved by his travels; he seemed no longer the modest, diffident school-boy, but the gay and confident youth of fortune; and he assumed a degree of freedom in his address, in which he made some allusions to the life of honor, as it is falsely called, which, be the consequences what they might, she was resolved to resent.

This

This resolution she put in practice, by refusing to admit him to her presence under any pretence. The struggle cost her dear, but she had the fortitude to persevere. The noble inflexibility of her virtue carried conviction to the heart of Augustus, when he resolved to resume his travels; and, by a long penance, purchase his peace with the object of his affections, or never more return to his native country. Through the earnest intercession of Joseph Anthony, whom he had engaged in his behalf, she consented to grant him an interview previous to his departure. He expressed the sincerest contrition for any impropriety he might have been guilty of. He

knelt

knelt at her feet, and seized her fair hand, which she strove to withdraw.

“ If Miss Elmford,” said he, “ still persevere
“ in her resentment, I must submit to my fate : but,
“ whatever may be her determination, my passion
“ will remain unalterable. Not another of the sex
“ shall ever engross my affections. My constant
“ prayers shall ascend for her felicity ! Till her heart
“ shall melt in pity to the unfortunate Augustus,
“ those scenes of former happiness shall never more
“ glad his eyes !”

He

He bowed, raised her hand respectfully to his lips, and with lingering looks, that "spoke unutterable things," withdrew.

Miss Elmford fell on the sofa, and gave way to a flood of tender tears.

Compassion proper to mankind appears,
Which Nature witness'd when she gave us tears.

Of tend'rest sentiments we only give

This proof---To weep is our prerogative.

Augustus hastened to embark ; and, in a few days, she heard of his safe arrival at Calais. Every

scene

scene about the Hall now wore in her eyes a gloomy appearance ; and the only company she chose, were the family of Joseph Anthony, whose wife was a most agreeable woman, and the venerable Dr. Goodwill ; and to those she dedicated the principal portion of her time.

She had of late observed a visible change in the austere manner of her Lord, which she considered merely as the effect of her deceased Lady's recommendation of her to his favour : but his remarkable condescensions soon began to give her some uneasiness.

ness. She had been informed of his former dissipated character; and she trembled at the idea of being a dependant on the bounty, and in the immediate power of such a man. She would have been happy rather to have seen him set her at the distance of the humblest menial.

As his melancholy wore off, she had the mortification to observe his assiduities increase. He frequently assured her, that he could not consider her in the light of a servant, (as she had requested,) but a superintendant of his domestic concerns, in which

capacity

capacity he expected her to exact the subordination of all his attendants.

This trial was a painful one. She knew not how to resist his generosity, nor how to accept his favours : She wished to discover the motives from whence they arose. She was now the only female of consequence in the family ; and feared a consequence so conferred would, in all probability, expose her to the envy, if not to the calumny, of a censorious world.

She

She consulted Dr. Goodwill occasionally ; and his counsel, added to her own conscious rectitude, confirmed her mind, and fixed it's waverings. He dissembled not the failings of Lord Lauderbrooke, though his patron. He advised her so to comport herself, as to ensure respect, and, like Cæsar's wife, silence even the faintest whisper of *suspicion*.

Miss Elmford had acquainted her honest parents with the death of her benefactress, and darkly hinted at the critical situation in which she stood. The good people took the earliest opportunity of expressing

ing their apprehensions ; and, in their epistles, which were wrote by the good Clergyman, her father's employer, they tenderly cautioned her, above all things, to regard her reputation, even though she should be obliged to return destitute as she left them ; in which case, they would welcome her to their parental arms, and think themselves happy in supporting her with the labour of their hands, and the sweat of their brow.

She was but too soon relieved from a state of incertitude, by her Lord's direct avowal of an illicit passion !

passion ! She stood for a moment silent and shocked at the proposal : but had, however, the presence of mind to express her resentment of his conduct with the most determined tone of virtue. He was disconcerted at such a repulse ; and endeavoured to soothe her with presents, which she rejected with the contempt they deserved.

He left her, with the best grace he could, half admiring, and half execrating, her noble integrity ; and she retired to the dressing room, formerly her honoured Lady's, where throwing herself on her knees,

knees, with her face on the sofa, she aspirated a fervent prayer to Him who had been her guardian from her earliest years, to protect her through the perils of her present situation.

Those lines, which had been written by Lady Lauderbrooke, and which she had set to music, and sung, assisted by her harpsichord, on which she played delightfully, afforded her much consolation :

Rough is the path that Virtue treads ;

Sharp are the thorns that spring around ;

Narrow's the gate to which it leads,

And ev'ry step enchanted ground.

D

Though

Though oft the flow'ry vallies rise

Delightful to the trav'ller's eye,

Ah ! tempt them not ; in gay disguise,

There thousand hidden serpents lie.

There youth and beauty's deadliest foes

Await, in Fortune's shades, their prey ;

Soft Flatt'ry's firen music flows,

With Love, assiduous to betray.

Oh take with thee yon modest maid---

RELIGION is the virgin's name—

Accept her counsel, trust her aid,

And share the bliss her Vot'ries claim !

Indeed,

Indeed, her Ladyship had formerly presented her, as though from a kind of *prophetic impulse*, with several of her little compositions, of a similar turn, from which the following “Elegy, to the
“Memory of an unfortunate Young Woman,” cannot here be thought superfluous, or mal-à-propos:—

Cold, cold, September's breezes blow,

And deep the shades of night descend,

While from the yew's funereal bough

Eve's baneful, chilly drops impend.

See'st thou, dim rising through the gloom,

Appear yon white, unsculptur'd, stone?

Alas! 'tis lovely Emma's Tomb,

Which weeping Virtue long shall own.

Untimely fell the maid divine,

A victim to the wiles of Love;

Guilt's keenest pang—vile man!—be thine,

Whom Youth, nor Innocence, could move!

O, *Beauty*! frail and fatal dow'r!

What storms, what snares await thy bloom,

And, in thy best and brightest hour,

Conspire to seal thy hasten'd doom!

Yet,

Yet, still, if honour guard thy side,

Though Truth, nor Faith, nor Worth should save ;

Those tears affection ne'er can hide,

The Muse shall pour upon thy grave !

Miss Elmford waited for an opportunity of laying her difficulties before her reverend monitor ; and, taking advantage of the absence of Lord Lauderbrooke, and the good man's visit in that interval, while the blush of unfeigned modesty heightened her native beauties, she frankly entered into every minutiae of this vile proposition.

The worthy doctor awhile lifted his hands and eyes in silent astonishment ; and then gave way to a zealous resentment of the offence.

“ Can it be possible,” exclaimed he, “ that Lord
“ Lauderbrooke can think so meanly of the dearest
“ friend of his departed saint ; and *will* he not be
“ overawed by the matchless virtues of a Miss Elm-
“ ford ? Well may we deplore the evil bias of human
“ nature !—I have learnt not to fear the face of
“ man.—“ *Woe be unto me, if I speak not the*
“ *Truth,*” is the language of Scripture. I will
“ wait on his Lordship immediately ; and, whatever

“ may

“ may be the consequence, I will not forbear, till

“ I have kindled on his cheek the blush of shame, and

“ implanted in his heart a deep remorse, for neglect-

“ ing the dying admonitions of the best of women !”

“ Pardon me, dear Sir !” said she, dropping on

“ her knee, “ if I beseech you not to let this affair

“ go beyond yourself. I dread the vengeance of a

“ man of such violent passions ; and hope the re-

“ pulse he has met with from me, will restrain him

“ from similar freedoms. Many, many, obliga-

“ tions do I owe to this family : let not its tran-

“ quillity be disturbed on my account ! I should be

“sorry to appear ungrateful to the husband of my
“dear deceased Lady, however unworthily he has
“acted!”

The good man was charmed with her gratitude
and humility, and tenderly raised her, with assurances that he would, for her sake, let the matter drop: but cautioned her to beware that an overstrained generosity did not betray her into a snare; observing, that an excess of Mercy is a breach of Justice. He added, that, should her Lord presume further, on her silence, he should think himself de-

ficient

ficient in his duty, and unworthy of his sacred calling, did he not reprove him with unqualified severity : for he was commissioned from above, to use all his poor abilities, in order “ to turn men from “ the error of their ways ; ” and to direct them into the paths of salvation.

She bowed assent ; but her heart was too full for a reply. He obsequiously retired, and left her to melancholy reflection.

“ Good Heaven ! ” exclaimed she, wringing her hands, “ what a change do I experience ! Where

“ shall I turn for protection, when those who are
“ entrusted to guard my honour and happiness,
“ prove unfaithful to their charge ! Are Father and
“ Son both in league against me ? Yet, am I
“ bound by Gratitude—by Love—to keep an al-
“ *most criminal* silence !—”

Her feelings were now wrought up to the highest pitch, when she threw herself into a chair, and sought that relief which is the privilege of misfortune, while those charming lines of Roscommon struck with full force on her mind :

How

How happy is the harmless country maid,
Who, rich by nature, scorns superfluous aid ;
Whose modest cloaths no wanton eyes invite,
But, like her soul, preserve their native white ;
Who, free from storms, which on the great ones fall,
Makes but few wishes, and enjoys them all !
While on sweet grafs her bleating charge does lie,
One happy lover feeds upon her eye :
Not one who on her, gods, or men, *impose* ;
But one whom *Love* has for this Lover *chose*.

Many weeks passed before she observed any thing
in the conduct of her Lord which could renew her un-
easiness, till one day, in the course of a conversation,

into which he had imperceptibly drawn her, he took occasion to endeavour to conciliate her mind, by a very valuable present of jewels, formerly her Lady's; offering, at the same time, some apologies for his late conduct; but still avowing a passion, which he declared himself absolutely unable to conquer.

She dropped on her knees, and clasping her hands, in agony, exclaimed, "O, my Lord! why did you take me from the humble station in which you found me, to make me either *guilty* or un-

" *grateful?*

“grateful? O spare me! and let me return to my
“parents, and to my native poverty; but let me
“retain the innocence I brought hither! If you
“grant this request, for yourself, and for every
“branch of your family, shall my daily prayers be
“offered; and I will never cease to invoke a thou-
“sand blessings on your heads!”

Fortunately, his Lordship lost his discretion at
this speech; and the natural turbulence of his temper
returning, he exclaimed, “Perverse girl! shall I
“not be obeyed? You are as unworthy of my notice,

“as

“as of my *generosity* ! But, I have you still in my

“power—And—remember !—I will take care—

“Ingrateful !——” He said no more, but flung

himself away ; and clapped the door after him,

with such violence as shook the whole fabric.

Miss Elmford remained thunderstruck, and her eyes refused her their wonted relief of tears. She stood almost inanimate, a statue of despair. His last words sunk deep into her heart : they contained a threat ; imperfect, indeed, but terrifying.—“ *Remember !—I will take care !*” Perhaps, thought

she,

she, he meant for the conclusion—" *You shall not escape!*"

The state of her mind, for the remainder of the day, was a state of inexpressible anxiety, apprehension, and alarm. She confined herself to her room till the evening, when, weary of her perplexing conjectures, and of *herself*, she intended taking a walk in the grove, behind the house; a scene which, for its tranquil and retired situation, she was remarkably attached to.

The

The path to this pleasant spot lay through the kitchen garden, at the extremity of which was a little wicket, which opened into the principal avenue. This wicket had never had any other fastening than that of a latch. What must have been the astonishment of Miss Elmford, when she found it secured by a strong lock, and could get no information of the key from any of the servants!

Her fears were now confirmed: and she had every reason to suppose, from her prevaricating answers and conduct, that one of the upper female ser-

vants,

ough the wants, who had been suspected of an intimacy with
h was a her Lord, was in the secret.

Her case was now desperate, and she set all her in-
vention on the stretch, to meditate an escape from a
place and people, which she began to despise as
well as fear. It was impossible to scale the wall
without assistance, and she knew not but every one
in the family might be in the interest of her Lord.

Surrounded, perhaps, by spies, she knew it
would be in vain to attempt to leave the house by

way

way of the front gates ; as, in that case, she would be open to their view, for at least half a mile over the lawn. At last a thought struck her, which appeared highly favourable to her design.

The wife of Joseph Anthony, by the recommendation of Miss Elmford, was laundress to the family ; and the good man, on a certain day in every month, fetched the linen from the Hall for the wash at their own house. She recollected this was the evening on which he was to come.

In

In the evening he arrived, and, as usual, was introduced to his benefactress, whom, to his great surprize, he found in tears; but he congratulated himself on his good fortune in having a letter to present her, which he had just received from Augustus; and which, he concluded, would administer the comfort of which she seemed to stand in need. She took it with an absent mind, and broke the seal; but was too much agitated to examine its contents.

“ Oh, Joseph!” said she, “ I once had the
“ good fortune to render you a service. I now

“ stand

"stand in need of a return of that friendship. Can

"you be secret? You see me now a prisoner in

"the very house in which I have formerly been

"so happy! I must fly this place. Will you assist

"me? Will you save me from the dangers which

"surround me?"

Joseph stood fixed to the earth, in gaping astonishment. He made no farther enquiries than, what could he do to serve her?

She said, if he could conceal in his basket of

linen,

linen, and take away a few necessaries, which she would fetch him, to keep them at his house till he should hear farther from her, she would trust to Providence for the rest ; when, hardly giving him time to reply, she hastened up to her room, and packing up a few trifles, committed them to the care of honest Joseph ; begging him to leave the house as soon as possible, in order to avoid suspicion. When she bade—God bless him, and his family, his looks spoke a respectful curiosity ; and the tears glistened in his eyes as he retired.

“ Joseph ! ” whispered she, catching the door

before

before it closed, "another word. My troubles
"make me forgetful. Do you think it impossible to
"procure a key, which may open the wicket
"that leads into the grove?" "Can you describe
"it's make, Madam," said he? "I think," re-
plied she, "it is but a common lock. The key,
"unfortunately, I have not seen."

"I shall be here again to-morrow, Madam. I
"will endeavour to get two or three keys; one or
"the other of which may, perhaps, answer your
"purpose, if you are *determined*"——

"*Determined!*"

“ *Determined !* ” — interrupted she. — “ I am, in-
“ deed, determined, Joseph. — My happiness, pre-
“ sent and future, is concerned. — Be secret ; be
“ expeditious ! ”

Here the sound of a foot on the stairs precipitated
his departure. He hastened to dispatch his business,
and quit the house.

At a late hour, a gentle tap at the door roused
Miss Elmford from her melancholy reverie. It
was Mrs. Eleanor, whom we have before mention-
ed as the favourite of Lord Lauderbrooke. She
came

came under a pretence to enquire after her health, and to offer her consolation in her trouble. Her discourse indirectly led to the amiable qualities of her Lord, and the high esteem he professed for Miss Elmford. She easily saw through the artifice, grew uneasy, but, without offering a direct resentment, removing from one chair to another, tacitly evinced her contempt of the message and the messenger.

Eleanor, from a want of equanimity, after a little while, flamed out, upbraided her with illiberality, and want of gratitude to the family: nor did

she

the even spare to *threaten*, when Miss Elmford could not be induced to answer her impertinent remarks or interrogations; and at last flung away from her in a manner which seemed to forbode some more alarming misfortune.

She thought this a not unfortunate, though disagreeable, incident, by which she now saw well to what she had to trust, and could not close her eyes to sleep for the night, growing impatient, almost to distraction, to know the event of her scheme with Joseph.

E

In

In order to divert her melancholy, she opened the letter, which she received the preceding day ; and which, in her perturbed state of mind, she had hitherto forgotten. She observed that its date was a month prior to its receipt ; from whence she concluded that it must have been miscarried, or mislaid for the intervenient time. Spite of all her struggles, her heart beat to love, when she cast her eyes on the subscription ; and its contents were such, as considerably interested her feelings, and bespoke for the writer a degree of compassion, of which she thought her bosom incapable. He concluded by

observing

observing that, he could no longer absent himself from her presence ; but that, sensible of the impropriety of his conduct, which he ascribed only to youthful levity, and wearied with racking suspense, he was determined to return home, and throw himself at her feet, to solicit her mercy, or meet that fate which must be the consequence of her inflexible determination.

Joseph having staid later than his usual hour, she began to fear that some suspicions had arisen ; and that he would be refused admittance to her.

She, however, soon found herself agreeably deceived, by his arrival with the promised keys, by which circumstance she found her mind much relieved; and making him a pecuniary present, with a promise to give him early information of her success, she dismissed him with tears in his eyes, and half-uttered blessings on his tongue.

On revolving the step she was about to take, Miss Elmford's heart palpitated with undescrivable sensations; nor was the least cause of her regret, that of leaving her little library, with which she had
been

been complimented by her worthy Lady; and where, in her company, she had spent some of the happiest moments of her life.

This collection did honor to the taste and piety of that divine woman. In addition to the first classical productions in divinity, history, biography, &c. it comprised the lighter species of literature; though every thing of a loose, irreligious, or indelicate nature, which serves to corrupt the taste, or inflame the passions, were carefully excluded.

Her Ladyship was neither pedant nor bigot; her judgment was sound, her reasoning truly logical, as well as Christian, by which she soared above those narrow notions, which sometimes prejudice and cramp the most worthy minds. Of those poets who have espoused the cause of virtue and religion, she had the highest opinion; and authors who taught by example as well precept, she ever held in the greatest estimation; among the foremost of those ranking the ingenious *Mr. Richardson*, whose works she frequently read, and whose maxims more frequently recommended and inculcated.

Fable and allegory were originally intended to be the vehicles of edification and morality. They were the chaste dresses in which exuberant fancy exhibited the fairest forms of truth and virtue, in order to render them more captivating to mankind. Those who read the scriptures attentively, will find many of their scruples obviated, by observing a principal part of them contain much of this kind of writing. The poetical parts, particularly, abound with imagery, allusions, metaphor, and figures, which must strike the mind very forcibly; not to say any thing of that sublime *whole*, which forms so complete a *system* of morality and redemption.

But, in process of time, the *external* embellishments became the objects of admiration, while the *internal* lay disguised, or hid from public notice ; hence those tales replete with incident, and destitute of sentiment ; written to no purpose, and read to no end ; from which the scrupulous have formed an unfavourable opinion, and continued to decry the whole as corrupt and immoral.

Nor can we form a much more charitable judgment of many works professedly *sentimental*. Are not the most brilliant sentiments of our modern au-

thors

thors ill-directed, or misapplied? Do they not tend rather to enervate than ennoble the mind? Even those who are the warmest enthusiasts for *ideal* sensibility, do they often display it in their conduct in life? They can pass by the starving child of misfortune with cold indifference; spurn “the naked wanderer of the street;” or treat with farcassic cruelty, the unfortunate female whom hard necessity has driven to seek an asylum in infamy!

It would, indeed, be well if writers of every description, in their lighter flights, would “keep in
 E 5 their

their mind's eye" that fine remark of Boileau :

" Rien n'est beau que le Vrai. Le Vrai seul est aimable :

" Il doit regner par tout ; & meme dans la fable.

" De toute Fiction l'adroite Faufeté

" Ne tend qu'a faire aux yeux briller la Verité"

These were the opinions of that good Lady to whom Miss Elmford owed her past happiness, and they are happily conformable to those of a worthy, and learned dignitary of the church of England.*

The

* *Archbishop Tillotson.*

The critical moment at last arrived. When the bell rung the servants to dinner, our adventurer stole down the back stairs, and, greatly agitated, walked into the garden: yet considering this as probably the last opportunity she would have, she hastened towards the gate, which was hidden from sight of the house by the interposition of some large spreading evergreens.

With a trembling hand, she applied two keys in vain; but the third fortunately effected her design, and admitted her into the grove.

With a fluttering heart, looking behind her every few steps, she flew down the gravel walk, which led, beneath the clump of firs, by her favourite chair, where she used to sit and read, till she had passed the gate which led into the great public road, where, to elude pursuit, she struck into a bye path, which she concluded would bring her into another, by which she should be able to reach her father's house about midnight, confiding in the early rising of the moon, and the fineness of the evening.

Under her arm she carried a small bundle, which

contained

contained a few necessaries ; and she thought herself justified in taking with her what valuables she possessed from the former kindness of her indulgent Lady, the very recollection of whom filled her mind with agonizing pangs. Oft would the big sigh burst from her bosom, and the tear roll down her damask cheek, as she cast her eyes over the vast extent of country, which now began to fade around, as the sun sunk beneath the distant azure hills :

The ev'ning now with blushes warms the air ;

The steer resigns his yoke, the hind his care ;

The clouds aloft with golden edgings glow,

And falling dews refresh the flowers below.

To

To a heart at ease, the serenity of the evening, and the beauty of the surrounding landscape, might have afforded much pleasure. It was composed of fine level downs, on one hand, purpled with wild thyme, whose fragrance floated on every gale: on the other appeared vallies, watered with serpentine streams, whose banks were cloathed in green and yellow; and, to bound the whole, hanging-woods, which covered the screens of the hills, as far as the eye could stretch. All these in vain conspired to harmonize the passions of the fair exile. She had some faint recollection of having passed this road

once

once before; that was with her beloved father, in their way to Lauderbrooke Hall; but how different then were her sensations! then, all was novelty and expectation: now, bitter reflection and regret.

According to her own computation, she must have been about seven or eight miles distant from the Hall, when the last faint gleams of the setting sun quitted the tops of the hills, and the black clouds begun to rise on the verge of the horizon.

Approaching the borders of an extensive forest, she met a woodman with a bundle of sticks on his back,

back, and his bill hanging on his arm, returning from his labour. Encouraged by the openness and simplicity of his countenance, she enquired if the path she was then in lay directly through the wood; and whether there were any cross roads, which might mislead her?

“Madam,” answered he, “if your honor
“would be advised, I believe you would not go
“through that wood, but take your road on the
“left, which goes round it: it may be a mile far-
“ther, or so: but ’tis almost night; and I fear,

“by

“by the working of the clouds, that we have a
“storm coming. Besides, they say there has been
“bloody work hereabouts : that some passengers
“were formerly killed near an old castle, which
“you will pass, by the road’s side ; and that the
“spirit has been seen to cross the road frequently,
“staring *mortagously* with eyes as large as saucers!
“For my part, I have *never* seen *nothing* myself ;
“but I know those that have ; and ha’ been mainly
“frightened too !”

“And, pray friend, is the castle you speak of
“inhabited ?” said she.

“O,

"O, yes," said he. "Some old people live there; but they are seldom seen out by any body. As for me, I would not live in it for all the world!"

Possessed of a mind duly sensible of serious impressions, but superior to superstitious notions, she smiled at his simplicity, thanked him for his kind information and advice, and proceeded on her journey.

She had not gone far, before the heavens were obscured with blackest clouds, and the rising winds

howled

howled loud through the bending branches of the ancient forest oaks. These presages were succeeded by a violent storm of rain, and a clap of distant thunder.

She now began to tire, and felt her spirits fail her, when she observed a faint glimmering light, on an eminence a little way on the right, towards which she turned ; and with some difficulty passed the court, which was strewn with massy ruins, that the rude hand of Time had shaken from their foundations.

After

After knocking two or three times at the door, it was opened by an old woman, with a taper in her hand, the feeble rays of which served to discover a countenance far from affording encouragement to our benighted traveller. The complexion of her hostess was of a wanish yellow, furrowed with the deep wrinkles of age; her brows overshadowed a pair of red and hollow eyes, with a nose and chin which nearly formed an arch over a wide and toothless mouth.

Miss Elmford, with a modest diffidence, begged pardon for her freedom, informing her that, not

being

being accustomed to this part of the country, and night coming on, together with tempestuous weather, she had been induced to beg the favour of the indulgence of their kitchen fire till the morning, for which she would gladly make them a compensation.

A hoarse voice, which seemed to issue from an adjacent room, then said, "Let 'em come in."

At which the old woman opened the door, and stood on one side to admit her, measuring her from head to foot, with her eye, as she entered, as though in admiration of her beauty and elegant

form ;

form ; then shutting the door, in an unsocial accent, with a kind of half welcome, she bade her follow her.

She introduced her into a large apartment, the walls of which were decorated with tattered pictures, hatchments, rusty weapons, and pieces of ancient armour, some of which were hung on the large antlers of the stag. The floor was checquered with black and white marble. A few antiquated damask chairs and a table were all the furniture it contained ; and those were evidently in the last stage of decay.

Before

Before a smoaky wood fire, on the hearth, in a worm-eaten chair, sat a grizly figure of a man, over whose fallow and sickly features seemed to hang a gloom of melancholy, which particularly struck her attention.

He drew aside his chair, to make room for them; but still preserved a dark and fullen silence. For a moment he raised his eyes to the lovely countenance of his fair guest; then fixed them again on the fire, in a kind of stupid contemplation.

A sigh

A sigh burst from the bosom of Miss Elmford, which seemed to awaken the curiosity of her hostess, who then first expressed a desire of being made acquainted with the cause of her journey. Miss Elmford was encouraged by her interrogations, and artlessly gave a short history of the last few years of her life.

Her tale now began to win the attention of the old man likewise, who listened with an apparent degree of interest; and even now and then required a repetition of some particular passages of her narration; at the conclusion of which, they both with-

drew to the door, where they seemed to converse with some earnestness, though in a low voice; and, by their frequently casting their eyes towards her, she concluded that they were consulting how to accommodate her for the night.

The old woman then set on the table a crust of brown bread and cheese, to which she added a jug of four beer; of which Miss Elmford partook with thankfulness, for she had ate little that day.

After supper, the old man retired to rest: when her hostess informed her, that she had only two beds

F

in

in the house, one of which had not been slept on for a long time, and was in a room which was very seldom opened, and wanted airing. If she could dispense with that, and could lie down with her clothes on, she was welcome; and she would leave her a lamp to burn by her.

She accepted the offer with gratitude; and having conducted her through some intricate passages to the apartment, the old woman, whose name, she learnt, was Magdalene, wished her good night, shut the door, and retired.

After

After falling on her knees, and recommending herself to the protection of the Almighty, she composedly arose, and contemplated her situation. The furniture of the bed-room was of the same stamp and date as that of the apartment below.

The storm now abated, the winds subsided, and the moon was breaking through the clouds right before her window, which was of the gothic architecture; and whose dim panes would scarce admit its feeble rays. She raised herself on a broken chair, and looked out at a casement, which clattered as she opened it, from whence she was enabled to form

some idea of the building. It was a structure which had often seen the ruthless hand of Time—

“Sweep the toiling race of men,

“And all their labour’d monuments, away.”

The two round towers, with decayed battlements crowned with mantling ivy, caught the beams of the moon, and rose in the boldest point of light: the other parts were massed in shade. Amidst the stillness of midnight, the hooting of the owl, and the rustling of the dying breeze through the surrounding

trees

trees of the extensive forest, added not a little to the solemnity of the situation.

The walls of the room she possessed were damp, mouldy, and streaked with green, where the rains had frequently oozed through the neglected roof; and, as she examined every part minutely, she discovered a trap-door in the corner, which opening with great difficulty, she saw a few steps, which communicated with a long dark gallery, of which she could not see the end. Her courage failed her: she shut the door softly, and laid her down on the

bed : but found it impossible to compose her eyes to sleep, from a restless curiosity to become acquainted with the other parts of this mysterious building.

Soon as day-light entered her windows, she arose ; again opened the trap-door, and taking the lamp in her hand, descended the steps, and passed the gallery ; at the end of which she conceived she heard a voice, like that of one in prayer or supplication. She started back, and recovered her surprise, by endeavouring to persuade herself that those sounds were only the suggestions of a disturbed imagination ;

gination ; when a grating behind her, like that of somebody unlocking the door of her apartment, recalled her attention, and she flew back, and let down the trap-door with the greatest precaution ; which she had no sooner done, than her hostess entered ; and it was with difficulty our fair adventurer could conceal her perturbation.

Magdalene appeared far more civil and conversible than on the preceding evening, and even apologized for the poverty of her lodgings, and so forth. Her lovely guest, with unaffected gratitude,

silenced her with thanks for her kind attention and solicitude on her account.

They both returned to the room to which she was at first introduced; and the old man, whose name, she understood, was Rufus, joined them at breakfast; nor was he so reserved as he had hitherto appeared. He led to the subject of the last night's conversation, and, she thought, he seemed to dwell upon it in a remarkable manner. They both advised her by no means to think of pursuing her journey alone through the forest, without a guide; and

then,

then, without giving her time to reply, insisted she should stay till noon, and take a relation of theirs, who would arrive about that time, to accompany and direct her.

She expressed great anxiety to go: but her host (apparently from motives of kindness) refused to comply with her desire.

She passed the morning with the greatest impatience, and no visitor appeared. She had frequently observed Rufus and his wife withdraw, and converse in a low voice, with some degree of warmth;

but her generous heart was ready to check every suspicion which rose in her mind, on balancing such circumstances. She knew not deceit herself, and was ever willing to judge favourably of others.

Evening approached, and the promised guide did not arrive; when she again yielded to their importunities, to stay with them another night. To this she the more readily consented, from a hope of having another opportunity of making farther discoveries; which lay much on her mind.

When her host and hostess were gone to rest, she

took

took her lamp in her hand, with great intrepidity opened the mysterious door, and again descended into the long gallery, at the end of which she discovered another door, with a large rusty key in it, which appeared to be seldom touched by mortal hand.

Here she fixed herself, and listened; when the same voice again struck her ear, and she could plainly distinguish these words, which seemed to form the conclusion of a prayer, and were pronounced with a strong and deliberate emphasis:—

“ Yet not my will, O Lord ! but thine be done ! ”

For a moment she stood petrified : but soon collecting courage, and putting to all her strength, turned the key, the grating of which, together with that of the reluctantly opening door, reverberated through the long and hollow arches, with a sound (“ to compare small things with great ”) not unlike Milton’s infernal doors,

“ Which on their hinges grated

“ Harsh thunders ; which the lowest bottom shook

“ Of Erebus ! ”

Here

Here she beheld a venerable figure of a man, just rising from an attitude of prayer. He was wrapt in a long cloak; his person was tall and graceful; his long beard waved in profusion over his breast; and on his pale countenance, peace and resignation were visibly pourtrayed. The furniture of his cell appeared to be only a wretched bed, a chair, and a broken table, on which lay a dirty bible, the best and only solace of his melancholy hours.

He turned his eyes towards the door, with astonishment, at sight of the lovely stranger; and his bosom heaved a deep sigh as he articulated, "Un-

"fortunate

“fortunate woman! by what perverse destiny are
“you doomed to become a partaker of my mis-
“fortunes?”

“Pardon, reverend man,” said she, “pardon
“an undesigning female, whose curiosity only can
“apologize for her intrusion.”

“Ask not my pardon,” said he; “’tis a mo-
“mentary gratification to me once more to behold
“the human face divine; but an additional pang
“distends my bosom, when I reflect, that another
“of my fellow-creatures is fallen into the hands of
“those

"those fiends, *whose tender mercies* are inexpressibly cruel!"

Her blood thrilled cold through her veins, as he finished his sentence ; and a serious sense of her perilous situation agitated her whole frame.

She, however, called up all her fortitude, and stilled the apprehensions of the good man, by assuring him that she had it still in her power to quit the place whenever she chose.

"Trust

“Trust then no longer those people,” said he:

“You know them not; they deserve not your con-

“fidence. Seize the opportunity. Consider your

“own safety: and leave me to my fate!”

Miss Elmford felt a sudden shock at this alarming
injunction!—

“Before the morning,” said she, “I cannot

“go. This night shall be devoted to your conver-

“sation. Unbosom to me your misfortunes; and

“I will hazard my own life to render you service!”

“Kind

“Kind and virtuous young lady!” exclaimed
he, “you have my heartfelt thanks for your
“good intentions: But, Ah! I fear”——He
shook his head——hesitated, and then remained sorrow-
fully silent.

She interpreted that silence not at all in her own
favour. However, after some little expostulation,
he drew from him the following brief history of his
misfortunes.

“Descended from an ancient and honourable fa-
“mily,” said he, “I entered into life with the
“fairest

“ fairest prospects, and the highest expectations.

“ My name can avail you nothing ; my misfortunes

“ claim your commiseration.

“ At an early age, I conceived an invincible
“ passion for the profession of arms ; and, having
“ obtained a commission, had the honour of signa-
“ lizing myself in different actions in the service of
“ my king and country.

“ In the late war, I was called upon to leave
“ an affectionate wife and an infant daughter, to
“ whose fate, alas ! I am to this day a stranger”—

Here

Here he clasped his hands, and raised his eyes in agony, while the big tears rolled down the furrows of his grief-worn cheek.

"I left,"—with some difficulty, resumed he—
"my native country, for the seat of war on the continent; where, after having surmounted many difficulties, and braved death in all its most dreadful forms, I returned, crowned with laurels, at the conclusion of a glorious campaign, to repose myself on the downy bosom of domestic felicity.
"But what mortal shall *presume* on *future* happiness? I had scarcely set foot on my native soil,
"when

“ when I was attacked in passing a wild heath by a
“ band of ruffians—by whose hands my faithful ser-
“ vant fell—who brought me ingloriously gagged
“ and blindfolded, by bye-ways, from a great dis-
“ tance, to this scene of horror, where I have remain-
“ ed ever since : never having till now been blessed
“ with the sight of a human being, but the wretches,
“ who deserve not that appellation, who bring me
“ my scanty morsel of daily food. I know not
“ how many years I have lingered here. I lost the
“ era of computation in a fever and delirium, into
“ which I fell, through the violence of my grief,
“ on first entering this mansion of sorrow. This
“ disorder

“disorder must have lasted me a very considerable time;
“and, even after my restoration to reason, I sunk
“into a hopeless stupor of a still longer duration.
“But, thanks to the God of all mercies! he
“has at last taught me “to look above this *little*
“*scene of things* ;” and, since there is no hope for
“me on this side the grave, hath endued my soul
“with faith and patience, to wait with humble resig-
“nation for the rapturous moment when he shall
“wipe away all tears from my eyes, and grant me
“an holy and happy enfranchisement. With David
“of old, I have learned to walk always in his sight,
“and to call on him night and day. His word
“alone

“ alone is my consolation and delight : confiding in
“ that, I pass the “ valley of the shadow of
“ death ;” and hope to come forth from the furnace
“ of affliction like gold seven times purified by
“ fire !”

Alicia stood fixed in speechless amazement, at
the recapitulation of some circumstances, which she
had before heard from the mouth of her late much-
honoured Lady—But recovering herself a little, she
exclaimed, with a tremulous accent—

“ Gracious

“Gracious Heaven! and is it possible your name
“can be—

“Beaufort”—interrupted he, with an eagerness
that evinced equal surprize, while he raised his eyes
to hers, with all the impatience of curiosity.

At that very moment they were alarmed by a
violent noise, like that of a huge fragment of the
building descending on the floor above their heads.

They were both startled. “Fly!” said he,
“sweet excellence! Fly this instant, lest you be

“implicated

“implicated in my misfortunes! Consider your

“own safety, and leave me to Providence!”

He caught her hand; but had not time to thank her. She burst away, darted through the gallery, mounted the steps, and shut down the trap-door with the greatest caution.

Trembling, and half breathless, with the violence of her agitation, she threw herself on the bed, in which state she thought she heard a voice of distress, and the sound of footsteps on the stairs; when her hostess appeared with strong marks of horror depicted in her countenance.

“For

“For God’s sake, young Lady!” cried she,
“rise, and come with me this instant!”

A thousand fears and suspicions at once rushed into her mind; yet, although hardly able to support herself, with trembling steps she followed Magdalene up the stairs, at the top of which she found her husband struggling in a fit.

The idea of the crimes of those wretches struck her with a secret horror; but, ever alive to the calls of humanity, she rendered every assistance in her

G

power,

power, to raise and restore the miserable object before her, whose eyes rolled with a kind of guilty terror on all around him; and, during the whole of that melancholy night, he appeared to enjoy but short intervals of returning reason. He now and then made signs, and muttered broken sentences, which the wife seemed anxious to suppress or conceal; nor was she much less restless and uneasy than himself. Her perturbation of spirits must, indeed, have been obvious to any one though not possessed of such lights as Miss Elmford, who now hardly knew to which object to direct her pity.

It is dreadful to behold the last struggles of conscious guilt—

“ When Conscience speaks—for it *will* speak at last,

“ Our *leave* unasked !”

And it is the maxim of the truly liberal mind, from a sense of it's own imperfections, at that awful crisis, at which the stoutest heart recoils, if it be not invulnerable, to—

“ Abhor the crime, but mourn the man !”

“ Sure there is none but dreads a future state—

“ And when the most obdurate swear they do not,

“ Their trembling hearts belie their boasting tongues !”

Towards the approach of day-light, he lay more composed, and fell into a slumber; but would frequently, like Shakespear's sanguine Monarch,* start, and exclaim—"Take them away!—Take "them away!—I wash my hands of it!"

Miss Elmford renewed her wish to depart, while yet she had the day before her: but the old woman, with the utmost earnestness, and with eyes swimming

* Richard III.

ming in tears, besought her not to leave her, till she could procure some assistance; or her husband's disorder should take a favourable turn; yet, be it as it may, she promised that she would not detain her longer than the next day. It was painful to her to refuse, though doubly so to comply with those hard and unpleasant conditions. She was willing to set circumstances in the best possible light; and hoped, from the appearance of sincerity in Magdalene's professions of gratitude, that her person was safe at least; and that this procrastination, through an unforeseen event, might give her some farther opportunity of seeing and rendering her services to an in-

nocent and unfortunate man, in whose fate she felt her mind so inexpressibly interested.

Another day, and great part of the night, passed in the most gloomy solicitude: but a little before the morning began to dawn, they observed in the old man a more permanent degree of reason; but, alas! it only returned to awaken him to the most poignant despair.

His whole frame was in a state of the most violent trepidation; and in the bitterness of his soul, he exclaimed,

“Wretch

“Wretch that I am! whither shall I fly? What
“have I done? Why will not conscience cease to
“torment me? Ah! I have done *such* things—I
“have been guilty of *such* enormous crimes, that
“the door of hope is shut against me for ever! In-
“jure not the innocent—we *have* done that too
“much *already*.”—[Turning his eyes to his
“wife.]—“Set them at liberty—Add no more to
“my load of guilt! by which I am overwhelmed—
“and sinking! I am about to enter into eternity,
“with hands imbrued with blood! with a heart
“black with guilt—I *cannot*—*will not go!* I *can-*
“not meet the Judge!”——

Here his ravings rose to the highest phrenzy of despair ; and Miss Elmford was ready to sink with terror, while struck with the truth of that alarming and awful assertion which she here saw verified—

A death-bed's a detector of the heart,

A *fearful* lecture, and of sov'reign pow'r ;

To vice confusion—*tho'* to virtue peace !

During this scene of horror and distress, a violent thundering was heard at the outer door. Miss Elmford's heart again palpitated. Magdalene flew down the stairs, and opened the door. Three men,
who.

who had left their horses in the care of a servant at the court gate, rushed in : the first a fine young gentleman ; the next a clergyman ; and the last a plain, honest-looking countryman. Impatience was in every look : they pressed forward with little ceremony. The old woman was overwhelmed with confusion.

Various apprehensions struggled in the bosom of Miss Elmford. One moment she hoped the expected visitor was arrived, to relieve her ; and the next, she conceived they were persons sent in pursuit of her by Lord Lauderbrooke.

She heard several voices at once; but could not particularly distinguish any thing which was said. She could no longer resist the impulse of curiosity: she stole to the top of the stairs, and listened unobserved, till she heard her own name mentioned; and the old woman, in hesitating accents, deny her. One of the voices grew louder, and more importunate—She knew it to be that of her father.

Then, with the swiftness of lightning, she rushed down the stairs, and flew into his arms, while he pressed her to his heart, and bathed her cheek with

his

his tears. She sobbed audibly, but could not speak.

"Be comforted, darling of my soul," cried the honest Ambrose, "be comforted! Look up, and
"thank your friend and deliverer."

She at length raised her lucid eyes, overflowing with tears, which met those of the amiable Augustus, who approached, and took her hand with a modest diffidence, while her heart throbbed, and glowed, alternately.

"May I be permitted, dear Miss Elmford!"

said he, "to congratulate you on your release from

“this vile place?” A ready blush waved over her humid cheek, while the enraptured father, without giving her time to reply, interrupted,—“Return, my Alicia, your best acknowledgments to this young gentleman. You know not how much you are his debtor: to him, and to him *only*, you owe your deliverance.—A thousand blessings attend him!”

It was now no time for punctilio—He would have proceeded—had she not turned to Augustus, and dropped on her knees, to thank him. His eyes beamed with transcendant lustre; and Miss Elm-

ford,

ford, forgetting every unfavourable impression, fancied she never saw him look so charmingly.

He took her other hand, and raised her with the greatest tenderness. She then first noticed her friend Dr. Goodwill; and took his offered hand.

By turns they each embraced her, while the tribute of joy and gratitude spontaneous flowed from every eye.

During this affecting interview, the old woman turned pale, her lips quivered, and her trembling limbs were scarcely able to support her. They ne-

ticed

ticed her agitation, and desired her to be composed: but what arguments can calm the guilty mind? Fear and terror are its natural concomitants. She beseeched them, with many tears, not to disturb the peace of her dying husband.

They bade her be comforted, and assured her, that, on the contrary, they would render him all the assistance in their power; and, as soon as her emotions had a little subsided, at their desire, she retired, though with some reluctance, to her husband, and left them together in the hall.

Here

Here Miss Elmford was made acquainted with the means of her discovery, to which account she attended with mute astonishment.

The very day that she left Lauderbrooke Hall, Augustus arrived, according to his proposal, and immediately flew to the house of Joseph Anthony, who informed him of her flight, and, *what he knew*, of the occasion of it: intimating, that he understood my Lord, his father, filled with revenge, was gone in pursuit of her. On coming to the hall, in his father's absence, he found every thing there in the greatest

greatest confusion ; and a letter soon after arrived, superscribed—

“ TO LORD LAUDERBROOKE, *with speed.*”

The letter was delivered to Augustus, whose impatience prevailing over his duty, and decorum, he broke the seal ; and read as follows :—

“ May it please your Lordship,

“ Your fair fugitive is fallen into our hands, where we will take care to detain her till

“ you

"you come. Make all the speed you possibly can,
"and the perverse fair one shall yet crown your
"wishes.

"Your's to serve, in what I may,

"Woodland Castle." "Rufus B."

This letter accounted for the former whisperings
and consultations she had remarked, and for the de-
lays she had experienced.

Her father had been made acquainted with her
previous intention, by their common friend Joseph;

and

and the old man immediately came to *his* house for farther information. Dr. Goodwill was consulted on the occasion ; and desired to accompany the lover, and the distressed parent, to snatch the unfortunate maid from the precipice of ruin ; and, there being no time to be lost, they set off immediately.

Their mutual congratulations were hardly ended, before Magdalene, as though unwilling to leave them long alone, returned ; but appeared not to have quite overcome her uneasiness and agitation.

Miss Elmford had not had time to report her discovery : she therefore waited a better opportunity ;

and,

and, with little ceremony, they all followed the old woman up stairs to the sick room; although she seemed to lead the way with much reluctance.

The husband, at their first entering, appeared delirious.——“Who are you?” cried he: “Are you the ministers of vengeance? If so, leave me! leave me! I shall not long be here. Let me but die in peace, I will disclose every thing!”

Dr. Goodwill offered him spiritual consolation, and he grew more rational in his exclamations: but it was with the utmost difficulty his wife could be kept

alive,

alive, while—although he frequently talked incoherently, and often wandered from his subject—he recited such deeds to his astonished auditors, as

“ Harrow’d up their souls, and froze their blood !”

It appeared that he was admitted, at an early period of life, into the confidence of Lord Lauderdale, [then Sir Thomas Beaufort,] and received the highest marks of his favour for the vilest of services—those of ministering to his guilty pleasures, and juvenile dissipations. He was privy to every amour; and made himself instrumental to every in-

trigue

trigue of the most accomplished libertine. Nor did his employer frequently fail to exercise his evil genius, in the deepest stratagems, and reward him with a liberality proportionable to his merits. It had been, comparatively, well, if they had stopped here: but they seemed destined to fill the measure of their iniquities!

The only remaining branches of this formerly extensive family, were Lord Lauderbrooke and Sir Edmund Beaufort; and even they but distantly related; though they appeared to be on a foot of the strictest

strictest intimacy. Sir Edmund's estates were considerable, and lay contiguous to those of his relation, to whom they devolved, in case of his decease without issue.

The selfish and illiberal heart of Lord Lauderbrooke felt uneasy at the union of Sir Edmund with an accomplished young lady of small fortune : and still more so on the birth of a daughter, about fifteen months after their marriage. Yet he had the address to conceal the chagrin, and appeared very desirous of the company of this amiable family ; in whose friendship his worthy Lady felt the most re-

fined

finest and undissembled happiness : nor had she a suspicion of the duplicity and perfidy of her Lord, who had secretly set his heart on the estates of his friend, and only waited for a favourable opportunity to get them into his hands.

This opportunity soon offered ; for Sir Edmund, in his military capacity, was ordered abroad ; and his Lordship, like David in the case of Uriah, hoped that he would fall in the heat of battle, that he might have nothing to answer for to his own conscience from the event. These hopes were frustrated by letters from the hero, that he had accomplished

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ed the purpose of his mission ; and was about to return with honour to his country. Lord Lauderbrooke intercepted all his letters ; and forged others in their stead ; purporting, that he had fallen in the field of battle.

Meanwhile he employed his minion Rufus to engage a band of ruffians to way-lay him, on his arrival ; and to bring him to this castle, which belonged to him, where he was to hold him in confinement for life ; in consideration of which important service, he promised to secure him an annuity, and make him the keeper of his injured relation.

Miss Elmford, struck with horror, here fainted
in the arms of her father. Augustus changed colour,
and waited with impatience for the sequel.

Rufus continued his narration by observing, that
there were still two obstacles in the way, about
which his diabolical employer consulted him; and
assured him of the most distinguished favours, if he
could remove them. He undertook the infernal business;
and engaged to set aside the lovely infant
and amiable mother. The *first* *dæmon* rejoiced
not more sincerely over the *first* *victim*, than Lord
Lauderbrooke over this proposal!

H

It

It was reported that the unhappy widow used to take a frequent excursion with her little innocent, about two years of age, into the most sequestered parts of the country, daily, to meditate on her loss, to brood over her misfortunes, and shed in secret the tear of bitter anguish! In one of those excursions—dreadful to relate!—the infernal cabal proposed to cut off root and branch.

Rufus, and another of his agents, undertook the bloody task; though he owned his heart revolted at the idea. They neither of them knew the lady personally;

sonally ; but, by mistake, surprized the nurse with the infant, one morning ; and she, instead of the mother, fell a victim to the monsters !

But the charms and cries of the dear infant quite unmanned them : when a countryman coming by, their coward hearts betrayed them, and they fled with precipitation ; while the dear unfortunate, left alone, raised its voice, and lifted its little hands for protection !

The traveller's heart melted. He took her up in his arms ; and, mingling his kisses and tears with

hers, sought to soothe her sorrows, by folding her throbbing heart to his bosom, with all the ardour of paternal affection !

The scene which took place, when the narrator came to this circumstance, surpasses all description. Augustus stood thunderstruck at the accumulated crimes of a father, and his heart half revolted from its allegiance. Miss Elmford sunk insensible into the arms of Ambrose, who, with streaming eyes, emphatically exclaimed, “ And I, thank heaven ! “ was that passenger ! And *you*, my Alicia, are “ the dear, dear rescued child !—Yes ! I was the “ instrument,

"instrument of saving you—Do not—do not dis-
own me!"—

She lifted her humid eyes to Ambrose—"Best,
"and tenderest of men! and *are you not my real*
"father?—and *have I not a mother indeed?* Give
"me my *other* parents; but let me not resign
"you!"—Then, after sobbing convulsively, she
exclaimed—"Thank heaven, I *have* seen my *other*
"father!—I have wept over him!—Let me *fly* to
"him! Let me carry him the tidings of liberty!
"Let me—let me be the messenger"——

She could not be restrained: the keys were demanded—she rushed away. They followed her. She descended into the prison, threw herself into his arms, and bedewed his neck with her tears. She had lost the powers of articulation! The heart of Augustus was swollen with indignation at the vile deeds of his father, and the dying miscreant, while it melted with commiseration for the wrongs of his honoured relation, whose hand he pressed and bathed in tears.

Dr.

Dr. Goodwill, after the first paroxysms had subsided, explained the whole mystery of wickedness to the astonished man, who embraced them all by turns, while his face was irradiated with a decent joy; and then, falling on his knees, he invoked every blessing of heaven on their heads for their kind services.

“High and wonderful are thy ways, O God!”
he cried: “Those who call on thee, shall not call in
“vain! Thou hast been my help and support in all
“my afflictions; and thou hast promised that, *thou*
“*wilt never leave me, nor forsake me.* Oh! give

“ me a heart duly sensible of thy mercies ; and ever
“ thankful for all thy goodness.—Forgive my ene-
“ mies, and give them grace to sue for that mercy
“ which they have denied to me and mine !”

They then supported him to the chamber of the
dying man, who shrunk down as though he had
seen a spectre ; and Magdalene, at their entrance,
fell on the floor, in a state of insensibility.

Nothing could exceed the solemnity of this
scene : they all knelt around the bed, by the desire
of Sir Edmund, to implore peace and pardon for

the

the wretch, whose averted eyes dared not turn on those he had so essentially injured.

Their presence, they observed, only served to increase his agonies; and they retired, desiring the unfortunate wife, on her recovery, to attend them; which she did, apparently with the sensations of a malefactor in his procession to the fatal scaffold!

They then solemnly assured her, that, if she would disclose whatever she knew farther of this diabolical business, and of the fate of the still-undiscovered lady, as they conceived she had already suffer-

ed sufficiently, they would not only pardon the past, but, provided they found her contrition proportionable to her crimes, set her above such temptations for the future; and that they would not further disturb her husband, whose glass seemed to have but a few sands to run.

“To *err* is human; to *forgive*, divine!”

This prudent measure had its effect in leading to the following completion of this very important discovery.

Lord

Lord Lauderbrooke, she said, was severely mortified at the failure of their foregoing sanguinary scheme ; and resolved that the wife of his unfortunate friend should not long be an obstacle to his ambitious designs, although Providence had once preserved her from his violence.

He took advantage of the distress of her mind, to convey her to a house appropriated to the reception of lunatics ; and then propagated a report, that she had rashly put an end to her own existence. They were likewise made acquainted with the place of her

confinement, a circumstance of the first importance.

It now remained to conduct Miss Beaufort [as we must now call her] to a place of safety, lest Lord Lauderbrooke should find her; and instantly to exert every means to liberate her unfortunate mother.

It was therefore proposed, that Ambrose should take home with him his long-adopted *daughter*; the *real father*, at the same time, desiring to honour them with his company; while the doctor and Augustus returned to the hall, to extort from his Lordship an order for the release of the lady.

For

For a *son* to criminate a *father*; to bring a charge which must affect the life of him to whom he owes existence; to sacrifice the affections of a *child*, and rise to act in the character of an *accuser*—is a task which requires the stoic inflexibility of a Brutus, who, adopting the Roman people as his children, condemned to death his own sons, as an act of justice to the commonwealth.

Augustus had ever been a pattern of filial obedience, and he possessed a mind susceptible of the tenderest impressions of humanity: but he found it im-

possible

possible to justify his conduct to the world, or his own conscience, should he connive at acts of such marked atrocity. It was therefore determined that, in order to spare his feelings, he should absent himself for a time, while Dr. Goodwill, whom he delegated, should act in the developement of this nefarious business according to the dictates of his own bosom.

This worthy man possessed an integrity of soul which was not to be biassed by the allurements of fortune, or the shocks of adversity. No obstacle

could

could be thrown in 'the way of his duty, which he was not capable of surmounting; nor could any thing divert him from that narrow path, so hard to tread, and so difficult to keep. His manners were strict, but not severe. Like him, whose servant he was, he was the advocate of justice; but, in justice he always remembered mercy. He thought, with Titus, every day lost, in which he had not done some good action: but when duty called him, to censure, he knew no distinction of persons; never forgetting the golden maxim of the ancient philosopher,*

pher,* "Those who reprove us are our greatest friends."

Lord Lauderbrooke was his patron : but he demanded an audience of him ; and, without equivocating, or qualifying, boldly opened to him a full and circumstantial account of the discoveries which had been made ; not fearing even to remind him, that he was amenable to his country for the violation of its laws.

The

* Pythagoras.

The natural pride of Lord Lauderbrooke took alarm, and burst forth in indignation at the disgrace which attended such a declaration from a dependant; he gave the reins to his violent passions; and, in his frantic emotions, outvied the most desperate madman!

The doctor waited the subsiding of this mental storm; and then, with a determined accent, assured him that nothing could avail him, nor palliate his offences, but an immediate order, under his hand, for the removal of the unfortunate lady from the confinement he had occasioned her.

Vice

Vice is frequently a coward when detected and exposed—its boasted fortitude is but of a momentary duration—

“ True courage dwells not in a troubled flood

“ Of mounting spirits, and fermenting blood ;

“ But in the soul with virtue over-ru’d,

“ Inflam’d by reason, and by reason cool’d.”

The doctor’s calm and steady conduct, his cool and determined reasoning, operated so strongly on the haughty temper of his Lordship, that he at length submitted ; and made some concessions, which did

little

little credit to his imperious spirit: but he refused to see his son; he refused to see his relations, or ask their pardon; while he lavished abuse on the treacherous Rufus, as he called him.

"My Lord," said the doctor, "the language of repentance and contrition would better become you. Cease to stigmatize or reprobate others, and look into your own bosom! The agent of your crimes is less culpable than you: besides, he has felt the agonies of remorse; and will most probably, in the course of a few hours, appear before a higher tribunal, perhaps to give in an accusation

"accusation against you as the abettor of his guilt!

"Think of this; and seek for mercy, while yet

"mercy might be found!"

and he called him.

He bowed respectfully, and left his Lordship astonished and confounded. He then, accompanied by Augustus, repaired to the cottage of Ambrose, where they were received with the greatest cordiality; and from thence, with the utmost impatience, they sought the place where the unfortunate lady was confined.

Alicia

Alicia could not be induced to stay behind; with her newly-discovered parent, she resolved to attend them.

The building was situated on a lonely wild, at a great distance from any public road; and presented a just specimen of the gloomy architecture of the fourteenth century. On delivering their letter,

they were introduced into an inner apartment, where a pale and emaciated, though not ungraceful, female figure, rose to receive them. Dr. Goodwill first advanced, in order to prepare her for the im-

portant

portant interview of those still more dear to her,

As he approached her, she recollected his venerable person, and fainted in his supporting arms. The

assiduities of the attendants soon restored her ; but

it was a considerable time before she was able to

bear the news of her enlargement, and receive the

affectionate embraces of an impatient husband and child.

Instead of attempting to describe the extatic passions which took possession of every bosom at this affecting meeting, it is surely wise, like the celebrat-

ed painter of old, to draw a veil over the scene,
and give imagination its amplest scope!

O! who can speak

“The mingled passions that surpriz’d each breast,

“And thro’ their nerves in shiv’ring transport ran!

“Then blaz’d the smother’d flame, avow’d and bold—

“*Love, gratitude, and pity*, wept at once!”

“Friendship is, of itself, a holy tie;

“But made more sacred by adversity.”

On their return to the cottage on the heath, the
good old Dorothy, with all the fond and passionate

anxieties

anxieties of a mother, on her knees, implored pity and pardon of the now happy parents; and, in the most moving language, besought them not to rob her of her darling child. "If I lose my Alicia," said she, "I lose all the consolation I have profited my old age! O! let me still *call her mine*; let her glad my eyes often, for the little time I have to live; and I will bless you all with my latest breath!"

She was comforted with their concurrent assurance, that her adopted daughter would never fore-

go that tender *name*; and that she should never be deprived of that maternal intercourse she had so justly merited. Her honest heart overflowed with grateful raptures, as she pressed her Alicia to her bosom, and bathed her cheek with a deluge of affectionate tears.

“ Her plenteous joys,

“ Wanton in fulness, sought to hide themselves

“ In drops of sorrow !”

They now turned all their attention to the narrative of the rescued lady, from whose own mouth they learnt, that she had been decoyed by a deep-laid stratagem to the place of her confinement,

I

under

under pretence of a temporary removal from scenes which only served to increase that melancholy which incessantly preyed on her heart.

The mind, under the pressure of affliction, naturally delights in solitude, and loves to pour out its woes in the deep shades of retirement :

“ It is the wretch’s comfort still to have

“ Some small reserve of near and inward woe,

“ Some unsuspected hoard of darling grief,

“ Which he, unseen, may wail, and weep, and mourn,

“ And glutton-like devour *alone*.”

But she felt a degree of alarm when she found her walks abridged ; and more so, when totally deprived

prived of liberty, and confined within those walls, which contained some of the most unfortunate of the human race. Her keepers, indeed, treated her with respect; but refused to answer her any questions, and maintained a rigid silence on the subject of her future destiny. She was furnished with books, and other indulgencies, to beguile the solitary hours: but what can compensate the loss of liberty, when we have a proper sense of that loss? There is not a heart, however weary of the world, but feels when under restraint; and *even sighs* for those scenes of freedom which can afford it *no pleasure*.

Resigned to her fate, she now sought to forget the present, and look to another, and a better,

state. Her poetical talents were far above mediocrity ; and she frequently exercised them on those subjects, for which they seemed happily calculated ; and on which a fine genius ought to be employed. Among other productions, she had preserved the following appropriate stanzas, entitled

THE CAPTIVE.

“ The little warbler of the wild,

“ Who long had rang’d, untam’d and gay,

“ By man’s insidious arts beguil’d,

“ And ravish’d from the shelt’ring spray,

“ Awhile neglects his food—his strain,

“ And beats his wiry prison strong ;

“ Till, proving all resistance vain,

“ He cheers his heart, and thrills his song :

“ So,

"So, lost to all the joys of life,

"To freedom, friendship, *social love*!

"This breast no more maintains its strife,

"Since all its struggles fruitless prove!

"No more, with retrospective glance,

"I turn my fondly-ling'ring eye;

"With faith and hope, my views advance

"To nobler scenes, and raptures high.

"Soon disencumber'd from those ties

"That chain her down to earth's dull clod,

"The light enfranchis'd soul shall rise,

"To enjoy her freedom, and her God!"

After this providential eclarcissement, Dr. Goodwill sought another conference with Lord Lauderbrooke, and found him in a frame of mind very

different from what he had expected. He now took the doctor's hand, thanked him for his frankness, and begged his direction to make his peace with heaven, and some atonement for his cruelty and ingratitude to his much-injured relatives; whose faces, he said, he could never see more; nor that of his son, to whom he had set so dreadful an example!—"Let me, through you," said he, "supplicate that pardon which I do not *deserve*, nor can I yet *ask* of them in person. Guilty as I am, I cannot meet those eyes, which must pierce me through—which must annihilate me! Heaven is witness to my remorse! Be it my turn now to suffer! and I shall feel a far bitterer pang than

"that

“ that which I have given others. I despise the
“ world, and the world’s wealth—which have so
“ milled me—and hide me in some unknown soli-
“ tude, where I may give up all the remaining days
“ of my life to mortification, prayer, and repen-
“ tance !”

The good man said he was authorized to grant the pardon he solicited, in the names of his friends ; and he hoped that the sincerity of his reformation would finally obtain the divine absolution.

Shortly after, his Lordship, in legal form, surrendered up all his real and personal property and estates in England, in favour of his son Augustus, and

and the much-injured Beauforts, only reserving to himself a small annuity, and place of residence, which had formerly devolved to him, in the Isle of Man, whither he retired, and gave himself up, according to his resolution, to a life of solitude and sequestration.

The wretch Rufus, who had been the instrument of all these domestic calamities, lived but a few days after the discovery.

The fair hand of the lovely Alicia, with the full approbation of all parties, soon blessed the worthy Augustus, whose heart had long been hers; and she saw herself mistress of that patrimonial mansion,

where

where she had spent some of the happiest, as well as some of the most bitter moments of her life.

The first care of this amiable pair, on succeeding to those estates and honours, was to contribute to the happiness of all their friends.

Ambrose and his wife, conformable to their wishes, were removed to reside under their own roof, where he acted in the capacity of a steward; and his good woman was indulged with the much-desired privilege of enjoying a kind and domestic intercourse with a woman who was the honor of her sex, and who knew how to estimate the maternal favours she had formerly received.

Joseph

Joseph Anthony was presented with a little free-school, which had been endowed by a former branch of the Beaufort family, by which he was enabled to support a character of decency and respectability.

Edmund Beaufort resumed his estates and honours, to the satisfaction of all the country round, on which he conferred his bounty with an unsparing hand. The exemplary virtues of his lady rendered her an object of universal admiration and esteem. From having long been sufferers themselves, they had learnt to feel more exquisitely for the sufferings of others. They had participated of the bitter cup of affliction; and, from sympathy, still became

more

more endeared to each other ; evincing their increasing affections by a reciprocal series of the tenderest offices. They had been initiated in the school of adversity, where they had learned, in part—while prosperous vice flourished and triumphed—why

“ The good man’s share

“ In life, was gall and bitterness of soul.”

They were taught to adore the wonders of RE-
TRIBUTIVE JUSTICE; and acknowledge the
hand

hand of PROVIDENCE, through the most intricate
labyrinths of *human events*, working in secret for
universal good.

F I N I S.

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